

Pride and Prejudice

VOLUME I

Volume I, Chapter 1

1. Which central themes and narrative characteristics of the novel are introduced in the famous opening sentence of *Pride and Prejudice*?

2. Why does Mrs. Bennet state that it is impossible for her and her daughters to visit Mr. Bingley if Mr. Bennet does not visit him first?

3. Why does Mr. Bennet prefer Elizabeth over his other daughters?

4. To what extent does the statement that it was the “business of [Mrs. Bennet’s] life” to “get her daughters married” serve as a commentary on hereditary practices among England’s landowners?

Volume I, Chapter 2

1. How is Austen able to portray Mrs. Bennet as a foolish and uneducated woman when she describes Mrs. Bennet's assessment of her relationship with Mrs. Long?

2. How do Mr. Bennet's comments on his wife's nerves provide a clue to his overall opinion of his wife?

Volume I, Chapter 3

1. What hopes does Mrs. Bennet immediately connect with Mr. Bingley's move to Netherfield?

2. Which characteristics cause Mr. Darcy to make a favorable first impression at the ball? What does this early assessment of his character reveal about the people in Meryton?

3. What behaviors does Mr. Darcy eventually display at the ball that cause people to change their initially positive opinion of him and deem him a proud and disagreeable man?

4. What causes Elizabeth to form a negative opinion of Mr. Darcy?

5. Why does Mr. Bennet express his wish that Mr. Bingley "had sprained his ankle in the first dance"? What does the Bennets' exchange reveal about their characters and their relationship?

Volume I, Chapter 4

1. What does Jane's ability to "always speak what [she] think[s]" reveal about her character as a human being?

2. What differentiates Mr. Bingley's social position from Mr. Darcy's?

3. To what extent does the behavior displayed by the Bingley sisters reflect the anxieties of the newly rich?

Volume I, Chapter 5

1. What reasons does Charlotte Lucas offer for defending Mr. Darcy's pride?

2. To what extent does Mrs. Bennet's observation that Mrs. Long "does not keep a carriage and had come to the ball in a hack chaise" serve as her explanation for Mr. Darcy's refusal to talk with Mrs. Long at the ball?

Volume I, Chapter 6

1. According to Charlotte Lucas, what does Jane need to do in order to secure Mr. Bingley?

2. To what extent does Elizabeth's assessment of Jane's interaction with Mr. Bingley exemplify her idea of an ideal marriage?

3. Why does Charlotte believe that "happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance"? What does her assessment reveal about her attitude toward marriage?

4. Which narrative technique is Austen employing when she describes Darcy's growing affection for Elizabeth: "he was forced to acknowledge her figure to be light and pleasing"?

5. To what extent do descriptions of Mary in chapter 6 serve as a commentary on the role and status of women in Regency England?

6. How is Miss Bingley's disgust at the "self-importance of all these people" present at Sir Lucas's ball ironic? What kind of irony is used?

7. What criticism of the female imagination does Mr. Darcy voice to Miss Bingley? What social criticism is Austen suggesting in this comment?

Volume I, Chapter 7

1. Why do the Bennets worry about their daughters' financial security?

2. What does the stationing of an army regiment in Meryton add to the novel?

3. Why does Mrs. Bennet consider Jane lucky when it begins raining shortly after Jane leaves for Netherfield?

4. How does Elizabeth's arrival at Netherfield overstep the boundaries of acceptable female conduct?

Volume I, Chapter 8

1. How do the Bingley sisters evaluate Elizabeth's spirit of independence? Why might they feel as they do?

2. How does Austen manage to portray the difference between Mr. Bingley's character and Mr. Darcy's character in her depiction of their conversation about the Bennet daughters and their chances of being "well settled"?

3. What is the significance of "reading" in this chapter?

4. Why do the Bingley sisters advise their brother to take Pemberley as a model when looking for an estate to purchase? What does their advice reveal about the Bingley sisters and their assessment of themselves?

5. How does Mr. Darcy respond to Miss Bingley's suggestion that Elizabeth is a woman who uses artifice and deception to make herself appear more desirable and other women appear less desirable in the company of men?

Volume I, Chapter 9

1. What is Elizabeth's assessment of Mr. Bingley's character, by her own admission in his presence?

2. To what extent can Mrs. Bennet's explanation of "good breeding" be considered to be an insult to Mr. Darcy?

3. What does Elizabeth's response to Darcy about poetry's being the "food of love" suggest about her romantic notions?

Volume I, Chapter 10

1. What does Mr. Darcy criticize in Mr. Bingley's character?

2. Why does Elizabeth object to Mr. Darcy's critical view of Mr. Bingley? What is she criticizing in Darcy?

3. What is the "desirable event" Miss Bingley is sarcastically referring to when she speaks to Mr. Darcy?

4. What can be inferred about Miss Bingley's attitude toward Mr. Darcy from her sarcastic allusions to a potential marital union between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth?

Volume I, Chapter 11

1. What does Miss Bingley's attempt at reading indicate about her character? How sincere is she in her attempt?

2. Why does Miss Bingley ask Elizabeth to walk around the room with her?

3. Why does Mr. Darcy not consider pride to be a negative characteristic?

4. What negative characteristic does Mr. Darcy possess, according to his own assessment? Why is this admission significant?

5. How does Elizabeth interpret Mr. Darcy's self-admitted character flaw? How does her assessment relate to the theme of pride and prejudice in the novel overall?

Volume I, Chapter 12

1. Why does Mr. Darcy resolve not to talk to Elizabeth if at all possible on the day before her departure from Netherfield?

2. Why is Mr. Bennet glad to have Jane and Elizabeth home again?

Volume I, Chapter 13

1. Who exactly is Mr. Collins? What does his presence in the story represent?

2. Why is Mrs. Bennet at first hesitant to receive Mr. Collins into her home?

3. How does Mrs. Bennet's statement that "there is no knowing how estates will go when once they come to be entailed" serve as a testament to her naïve character?

4. What is suggested by Mr. Collins's assurance that he came "prepared to admire" the Bennet daughters?

Volume I, Chapter 14

1. What does Mr. Collins's opinion of Lady Catherine de Bourgh reveal about his character and his attitude toward wealth and social status?

2. What does Mr. Collins's taste in books reveal about his attitude toward female education?

Volume I, Chapter 15

1. How does Mr. Collins evaluate his decision to marry one of the Bennet daughters?

2. Why does Mr. Collins change his mind and not ask Jane to marry him?

3. What does Austen reveal about Mrs. Phillips when she writes that Mrs. Phillips "was quite awed by such an excess of good breeding" when she meets Mr. Collins?

4. What is surprising about the encounter between Mr. Darcy and Mr. Wickham, and what might it foreshadow?

Volume I, Chapter 16

1. In the developing intrigue concerning Wickham, Darcy and Elizabeth, with whom does Elizabeth immediately side? Why?

2. What evidence does Elizabeth hear that contradicts Wickham's evaluation of Darcy?

3. Why is Elizabeth certain that Miss Bingley's romantic intentions with regard to Mr. Darcy are in vain?

Volume I, Chapter 17

1. Why is Jane not inclined to condemn Mr. Darcy when she hears about his past conduct toward Mr. Wickham from Elizabeth?

2. Why does Elizabeth begin to suspect that Mr. Collins has chosen her as his future wife?

Volume I, Chapter 18

1. Why is Elizabeth disappointed when she arrives at the Netherfield ball? How does her disappointment influence her attitude toward Mr. Darcy?

2. What is ironic about Elizabeth's warning Mr. Darcy not to form hasty resentments?

3. What does Elizabeth mean when she criticizes Miss Bingley for her judgment of Wickham: "his guilt and his descent appear by your account to be the same"?

4. Besides what she tells Mr. Collins, what underlying reason is there for her not wanting Mr. Collins to introduce himself to Mr. Darcy?

5. What does Collins himself suggest in his response to Elizabeth?

6. How does Mrs. Bennet contribute to Elizabeth's social humiliation?

Volume I, Chapter 19

1. What does Mr. Collins's marriage proposal establish about his character?

2. How do the reasons Mr. Collins offers for wanting to marry Elizabeth indicate that he would have married any of the Bennet daughters?

3. What do we learn from Mr. Collins's reaction to Elizabeth's rejection?

Volume I, Chapter 20

1. Explain the several reason that lie behind Mr. Bennet's reaction to Mr. Collins's proposal and Elizabeth's rejection.

Volume I, Chapter 21

1. What impression does the reader get from the tone and content of Miss Bingley's letter?

2. List the several events that have occurred to precipitate the Bingleys' and Darcy's sudden departure.

Volume I, Chapter 22

1. What does Mr. Collins's sudden engagement to Charlotte establish?

2. Compare Charlotte's attitude toward marriage with Elizabeth's. What does Charlotte's engagement to Mr. Collins foreshadow?

Volume I, Chapter 23

1. How does Mr. Bennet respond to the news of Charlotte's engagement to Mr. Collins?

2. How does Elizabeth evaluate Mr. Bingley's continued absence from Netherfield?
